



Accessibility and reasonable accommodation

January 2024

Acknowledgement

This guide has been developed by Sightsavers, the African Disability Forum (ADF) and Youth Business International on behalf of the Futuremakers technical advisory working group on disability and funded by Standard Chartered Foundation. The group specifically acknowledges the authorship of Elizabeth Ombati, ADF consultant to Sightsavers on meaningful participation and inclusion across its economic empowerment programmes.

Purpose, audience and objectives

Purpose	Accessibility is a requirement for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. To prioritise accessibility and universal design (the creation of buildings, products and environments that are accessible to everyone) will significantly progress equitable access. Even with improved accessibility individuals may still experience barriers and will still have a need for, and the right to, reasonable accommodation. This basic guide explains the difference between accessibility and reasonable accommodation, as well as offering some practical examples of reasonable accommodation and how to actualise this within programming.
Audience	It is one of a series of short guides developed by Sightsavers, within Futuremakers by Standard Chartered , and specifically written with Youth Business International programme partners in mind. While advice included in the document is more targeted towards YBI’s youth entrepreneurship programme, we have tried to make these relevant to all Futuremakers projects.
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To build greater disability confidence of the reader and how partners can better include youth with disabilities in their Futuremakers projects.2. To give specific examples, advice and simple steps on how to adapt projects to be more inclusive of youth with disabilities.

Accessibility and reasonable accommodation

Accessibility is a requirement for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. Without access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communication - including information and communications technologies and systems - and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, persons with disabilities would not have equal opportunities for

participation in their respective societies.¹ Accessibility should be provided to all persons with disabilities, regardless of the type of impairment.

Reasonable accommodation is a key concept in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). It is the practice of making changes which support people with disabilities to live their lives on an equitable basis with others. In the UNCRPD, reasonable accommodation is defined as ‘the necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.’²

Accessibility is related to groups, while reasonable accommodation is related to individuals.

Reasonable accommodation can be used as a means of ensuring accessibility for an individual with a disability in a particular situation.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include making existing facilities and information accessible to the individual with a disability; modifying equipment; reorganising activities; rescheduling work; adjusting curricula learning materials and teaching strategies; or enabling access to support personnel without disproportionate or undue burden.³

Other examples include making available screen reader software (e.g. Jaws or NVDA) for a person with visual impairment, provision of sign language to the Deaf, a mobility aide for a person with visual impairment travelling, flexible working hours for a person with psychosocial disability and making available a large screen computer for a person with albinism, etc.

Reasonable accommodation is individualised. One person with visual impairment might prefer using a screen reader while another might prefer braille or a braille display. A Deaf person might prefer sign language and another Deaf person might prefer to lip read.

The denial of reasonable accommodation is equated to discrimination on the basis of disability.

Now that I know, what do I need to do?

- As far as possible share information in accessible formats and use diverse communication modes to ensure work colleagues and partners are not missing out on key aspects of a programme
- Be confident to take active measures to support colleagues and young people with disabilities in programmes with reasonable accommodation and/or work adjustments
- Encourage employees as well as young people with disabilities engaged in our programming to request reasonable accommodation or work adjustments to support their work

¹ **CRPD General Comments No. 2 on Article 9, Accessibility**

² **CRPD Article 2; definitions**

³ **CRPD General Comments No. 2 on Article 9, Accessibility**

- Set aside budgets for accessibility, reasonable accommodation and other measures to ensure non-discrimination, such as sign language interpreters, local language translation, easy-read materials etc
- Choose workplace locations based on an accessibility audit which has been supported by young people with disabilities
- Where accessibility is not possible, the programme should take responsibility to provide reasonable accommodation for all staff when requested
- Make available processes where all incidences of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation, are raised with management and formally addressed through organisational complaints systems

Further reading

CRPD General Comments No. 2 on Article 9, Accessibility, CRPD General Comment No. 6, Article 5 Equality and Non-Discrimination.

How to make your work inclusive. Refer to this accessibility pack that offers guidelines for creating accessible communications across different contexts. It could be your posters or brochures; your PowerPoints or PDF documents; it could be creating digital content, or even your in-person or virtual meetings and many other accessibility tips to apply across different mediums and platforms): www.sightsavers.org/accessibility-pack

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and middle-income countries to
eliminate avoidable blindness
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